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Hegelian *Sittlichkeit*, Deweyan Democracy, and Honnethian Relational Institutions: Beyond Kantian Practical Philosophy

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The aim of this chapter is to develop a distinctive Deweyan, democratic interpretation of Hegelian *Sittlichkeit* and to show that this forms the basis of a critical theory in a *broad* sense. I argue that this critical theory not only offers a diagnosis of social pathologies and misdevelopments, such as social misrecognition, social nonrecognition, and invisibilisation. It also helps reveal the following *additional* social pathologies and misdevelopments not accounted for by Axel Honneth, namely epistemic silencing, testimonial injustice, and hermeneutic injustice. The chapter begins with charting a genealogical story in which Kant himself anticipates an intersubjective turn that is then robustly developed in the post-Kantian tradition. I then move on to discussing central features of *Sittlichkeit* and Deweyan democracy, which offer a powerful critique of liberalism. In the third section of the chapter, I argue that there is compelling reason to suppose Hegel's notion of *Sittlichkeit* and Dewey's notion of democracy have significant *critical* dimensions. The chapter concludes with the fourth section's discussion of #BlackLivesMatter and whether the neo-Hegelian critical theory response recommends revolution or reform.

The aim of this chapter is to develop a distinctive Deweyan, democratic interpretation of Hegelian *Sittlichkeit* and to show that this forms the basis of a critical theory in a *broad* sense. I argue that this critical theory not only offers a diagnosis of social pathologies and misdevelopments,¹ such as social misrecognition, social nonrecognition, and invisibilisation. It also helps reveal the following *additional* social pathologies and misdevelopments not accounted for by Axel Honneth's elaboration of the neo-Hegelian concept of a relational institution in *Freedom's Right* and *The Idea of Socialism*, namely epistemic silencing, testimonial injustice, and hermeneutic injustice. The distinctive advantage of my approach therefore lies in its focus on the *epistemic* practices governing misrecognition.

Broadly speaking, Hegel and Dewey both reject the early modern framework that sees the individual as fundamentally separate from society. *Contra* the Hobbesian picture of the individual and

¹ As Jörg Schaub writes about social pathologies and misdevelopments: "Social pathologies are presented as aberrations related to relationships of individual freedom, whereas social misdevelopments denote aberrations of social freedom. Both forms of aberrations are characterized as socially caused misunderstandings of the *norms that are already underlying existing, reproductively relevant social practices*, which, in turn, lead to a failure to realize the norms underlying them more adequately" (Schaub 2015: 113).

corresponding conception of freedom, Hegel and Dewey aim to eliminate the picture of a radical separation of the individual and social institutions by advocating a nuanced socio-political holism. According to Hegel and Dewey, freedom is a positive capacity to realize oneself. Crucially, such individual self-realization can only be achieved by construing individuality as necessarily embedded in a social environment structured by and promoting healthy intersubjective relations. Not only do Hegel and Dewey lament the fragmented and rampant individualism of modernity, they are also committed to the view that modern democratic social institutions must be structured in a way that establishes conditions for enabling the realization of autonomy. Conceived in such a manner, both Hegel and Dewey anticipate the Honnethian concept of a “relational institution,” namely an institution which realizes social freedom through symmetrical recognitive practices. Following Honneth, I argue that such a conception of intersubjectively constituted and realized *Geistigkeit*² sheds diagnostic light on a plurality of contemporary social pathologies and misdevelopments, *by revealing how current social institutions fail to promote intersubjective recognition*.

The chapter begins with charting a genealogical story in which Kant himself anticipates an intersubjective turn that is then robustly developed in the post-Kantian tradition. I argue that Kant’s *social* conception of agentive subjectivity in *An Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim* and in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* can be viewed as paving the way for Hegel’s and Dewey’s robust intersubjectivism. I then move on to discussing central features of *Sittlichkeit* and Deweyan democracy, which offer a powerful critique of liberalism. I argue that there are two important positive connections between Hegel and Dewey: (i) social processes and modern institutions are *structured* for the purposes of fostering the development of subjectivities that help individuals achieve self-realization; and (ii) social processes and modern institutions are *assessed* in terms of how well (if at all) they enable the development of unique subjectivities that help individuals achieve self-realization. In the third section of the chapter, I argue that there is compelling reason to suppose Hegel’s notion of *Sittlichkeit* and Dewey’s notion of democracy have significant *critical* dimensions. The chapter concludes with the fourth section’s discussion of #BlackLivesMatter and whether the neo-Hegelian critical theory response recommends revolution or reform.

1. Kant: Paving the Way from Autarky to the Intersubjectivist Critique of Liberalism

One of the most pressing critiques of Kantianism is that Kantian practical philosophy is incapable of explaining how historically concrete, socio-political institutions can *embody* values. In other words, the Kantian notion of autonomy is not equipped to make adequate sense of our normative practices, and our social embeddedness. Playing a crucial role in this

² Mindedness or our view of ourselves as *persons* and as rationally reflexive agents.

argument is the post-Kantian charge that Kant fails to sufficiently distance himself from a broadly speaking Cartesian conception of *agency*, which views subjectivity as asocial and ahistorical. For both the German idealists and the American pragmatists, the Cartesian tradition's theory of normative subjectivity needed to be replaced with a model sensitively attuned to a view of autonomy that is articulated *qua* intersubjectivity and later cashed out in terms of *vulnerability* by recognition theory.

Given that in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* Kant conceives of moral rationality in terms of a genus of cognitive procedures wherein each autonomous being determines whether or not their maxims adequately pass the test of universalizability, I think it would not be unreasonable to claim that the overall view of human agency painted by the *Groundwork* is one of agency as “autarky” (Herman 2009: 159). All that is required of rational subjects is that they judge and act on the moral law *without having to make recourse to other rational subjects to make sense of the sources and authority of moral norms*³ – intersubjectivity and sociality are deemed unnecessary for this cognitive endeavour here. This is not to say that other agents do not figure in our normative deliberation; rather, what Kant seems to be articulating is the notion that an individual rational agent need only reflect on the moral law within themselves in order to understand what is (and what is not) morally acceptable.

While the *Groundwork* focuses on an understanding of morality *solely* focused on respect for the moral law and the self-legislation of an autonomous rational will, the understanding of morality as it appears in *An Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim* and *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* is one articulated from a different perspective. In these works, Kant places significant emphasis on the *development of the rational capacities of the human species as central to our self-realization*:

Human beings have an inclination to *associate* with one another because in such a condition they feel themselves to be more human, that is to say, more in a position to develop their natural predispositions (Kant 2009: 8:20-21).

... [the human being] has a character, which he himself creates, insofar as he is capable of perfecting himself in accordance to ends that he himself adopts. By means of this the human being, as an animal endowed with the *capacity of reason (animale rationabile)*, can make out of himself a *rational animal (animal rationale)* – whereby he first *preserves* himself and his species; second, *trains*, *instructs*, and *educates* his species for domestic society; third, *governs* it as a systematic whole (arranged according to principles of reason) appropriate for society (Kant 2006: 321-22).

³ And also to make sense of how they ought to act, i.e. to make sense of the content of moral norms and not simply their source and authority.

There is compelling reason to think the picture of intersubjective agency and perfectionism in both the *Idea* and *Anthropology* is dissonant with the autarky of the *Groundwork*. For, as Barbara Herman writes, “[a]mong the things that the *Idea* implies is that moral justificatory principles cannot stand alone – they do not describe and cannot guarantee an ethical life” (Herman 2009: 152). In other words, what one finds absent in the *Groundwork* but present in the *Idea* is a commitment to regarding agency and normativity as being constituted intersubjectively in social and historical contexts.⁴

The reason why intersubjectivity replaces autarky is that autarkical reflection on the *form* of norms fails to be *completely* representative of our moral phenomenology, our ethical *Erlebnis*. For arguably the central feature of intersubjective agency and that of normative social practices – which is made especially vivid by putting vulnerability into the discursive foreground – is how we find ourselves *answerable to one another*,⁵ to the extent that “rational capacities are realized through response to developmentally salient experiences” (Herman 2009: 160). Realization through response to developmentally salient experiences reveals the extent to which we find ourselves embedded in the *social* space of reasons, wherein each rational agent plays the game of giving *and* asking for reasons. Understood in this way, the perfectionist emphasis on development and the inherent sociality of self-actualization is significant: the practice of assenting to and acknowledging normative constraints and normative entitlements requires that “the precise content of those implicit norms is determined through a ‘process of *negotiation*’ involving ourselves *and* those who attribute norms to us” (Houlgate 2007: 139). By virtue of being a process of *negotiation* as opposed to a non-negotiated process, what is deemed appropriate or inappropriate is never *fixed* but always subject to “further assessment, challenge, defence, and correction” (Brandom 1994: 647).

Crucially, as *active* rational agents, we do not view ourselves as normatively self-sufficient. However, this does not mean that we thereby relinquish our status as *independent thinkers*. Rather, it means that we recognize that we are intersubjectively vulnerable and that we continuously check our individual commitments and judgments against the commitments and judgments of our fellow moral agents.⁶ Under this account, a person is free when their rule

⁴ One should note here that the task of the *Groundwork* is *not* to provide the socio-historical material conditions of moral agency. Rather, all the *Groundwork* focuses on is understanding the formal and rational conditions of moral agency. Under this formal account, it does not follow that there are no socio-historical conditions for such agency. Still, the *Idea* goes a step further by claiming that such agency is constituted intersubjectively.

⁵ See Petherbridge (2016) for more on this topic.

⁶ Cf. Kant (1992: §57, 563; §740); Kant (2006: 128-29). See also Herman (2009: 161).

for action (their maxim) can survive rational scrutiny (can be objectively valid for all rational agents).

What is helpful about this Kantian precis is that acknowledging Kant's articulation of interdependence, to some extent at least, forms the background of Hegel's and Dewey's opposition to a *one-sided* notion of freedom. In doing so, Kant plays an important part in a genealogical story in which Kant himself anticipates an intersubjective turn that is then robustly developed in both the post-Kantian and pragmatist tradition.

2. *From the Intersubjectivist Critique of Liberalism to Democracy: Sittlichkeit and Dewey*

Hegel conceives of the state a *whole*,⁷ one whose structure is constituted by *mediated unity*. In contrast to Attic ethical life (typified by immediate unity),⁸ in modernity individuals no longer defines themselves as a functioning part of the *polis*; and in contrast to modern life, typified by difference,⁹ individuals do not regard their subjectivity as constituted independently of society. The transition from immediate unity through difference to mediated unity, the social freedom of *Sittlichkeit*,¹⁰ is one in which the individual can regard the state as helping foster the development of their rational capacities and thereby their self-realization. As Hegel writes:

[The norms embedded in the ethical structures of the family/civil society/the state] are not something alien to the subject. On the contrary, his spirit bears witness to them as to its own essence, the essence in which he has a feeling of his selfhood, and in which he lives as in his own element which is not distinguished from himself. The subject is thus directly linked to the ethical order by a relation which is more like an identity than even the relation of faith or trust (Hegel 1991: §147)

From the perspective of mediated unity, the individual is not conceived of simply as an anonymous cog in the workings of a complex social machine, nor are individual and state independently constituted, nor are the interests of the individual seen as *antagonistic* to those of the state. Rather, the individual is conceived of as a *bona fide* self-determining and rationally self-reflexive agent who requires assistance from social institutions in an effort to realize their

⁷ Cf. "The state in and by itself is the ethical whole, the actualization of freedom; and it is an absolute end of reason that freedom should be actual" (PR: §258Z). "The state is the actuality of concrete freedom" (PR: §260).

⁸ Greek ethical life is defined by the tragic conflict between the divine law and the human law: the structure of Greek ethical life is what causes tragedy, because individuality and universality cannot be adequately reconciled in Hellenic culture.

⁹ Abstract Right (personal freedom) and Morality (moral freedom).

¹⁰ See Hegel (1991: §§157-8, 181). In his social philosophy, Hegel uses "immediate unity," "difference," and "mediated unity" as equivalent terms for "universality," "particularity," and "individuality."

own autonomy. The state is required, as it is the *principal* institution of *Sittlichkeit*.¹¹ As Alan Patten argues:

A community containing the family, civil society, and the state is the minimum self-sufficient institutional structure in which agents can develop, maintain, and exercise the capacities and attitudes involved with subjective freedom ... The capacities for reflection, analysis, and self-discipline, the sense of oneself as a free and independent agent—can be reliably developed and sustained only in the context of certain social institutions and practices. In particular, in Hegel’s view, institutions such as property and contract, that work to mediate the attraction and expression of mutual recognition, must be in place for these capacities to be fully developed and sustained (Patten 1999: 37).¹²

For Hegel, then, social institutions are good because they are necessary to realizing freedom.¹³ Having articulated Hegel’s robust intersubjectivism, I now wish to turn to Dewey’s particular articulation of intersubjective agency.

The way in which Dewey conceives of intersubjective agency is bound up with his critique of classical liberalism. Under classical liberalism:

- 1) Individuals have normative and ontological priority over institutions;
- 2) Individuals have pre-political or natural rights;
- 3) Individuals have their subjectivities and interests fully formed before engaging in any kind of deliberative discourse;
- 4) Freedom consists in freedom from interference by others, including by the state.

Dewey rejects classical liberalism on the grounds that individuals are not ontologically prior to society and that social institutions are not merely means for fulfilling the pre-social interests of individuals. In the same way that the early modern tradition conceived of the relation between mind and world as one of fundamental separation, Dewey claims that classical liberalism is a *practical* exemplification of “the most pervasive fallacy of philosophical thinking” (Dewey 1930: 5), namely dividing up and separating phenomena into strict dichotomies. As Alison

¹¹ Cf. “The state is the actuality of the ethical Idea” (Hegel 1991: §257). “The essence of the modern state is that the universal should be linked with the complete freedom of particularity and the well-being of individuals, and hence that the interest of the family and of civil society must become focused on the state” (Hegel 1991: §260Z). “The State is the ... unification of the family principle with that of civil society. The same unity, which is in the family as a feeling of love, is its essence ...” (Hegel 1991: §535).

¹² See also the following by Robert Pippin: “Hegel thinks he can show that one never ‘determines oneself’ simply as a ‘person’ or agent, but always as a member of a historical ethical institution, as a family member, or participant in civil society, or citizen, and that it is only in terms of such concrete institutions that one can formulate some substantive universal end, something concretely relevant to all other such agents” (Pippin 1997: 73).

¹³ For more on this subject, see Patten (1999) and Neuhauser (2000).

Kadlec writes, “contemporary society has inherited from classical philosophy a set of dualisms that must be exposed and dismantled if we are to make real progress toward improving the human condition in an age of industrialisation and world war” (Kadlec 2006: 530). *Contra* the picture of the isolated, egoistic, asocial individual, Dewey advocates a nuanced social holism that aims to avoid the ontological mistake of conceiving of individuals as radically distinct from social institutions:¹⁴

[L]iberalism knows that an individual is nothing fixed, given ready-made. It is something achieved, and achieved not in isolation but with the aid and support of conditions, cultural and physical: - including in “cultural”, economic, legal and political institutions as well as science and art (Dewey 1935: 291).

As with the dissolution of the mind/world dualism, the individual and society are no longer conceived in “the celebrated modern antithesis of the Individual and Social” (Dewey 1927: 87). According to Dewey’s political holism, freedom should be understood in terms of a positive capacity to realize oneself. Crucially, such individual self-realization can only be achieved by conceiving of individuality as necessarily *embedded* in a reflective and social environment. These ecological conditions, moreover, must be democratically arranged and constituted if they are to perform their normative function. As Dewey writes in *Reconstruction in Philosophy*:

Government, business, art, religion, all social institutions have a meaning, a purpose. That purpose is to set free and to develop the capacities of human individuals without respect to race, sex, class or economic status. And this is all one with saying that the test of their value is the extent to which they educate every individual into the full stature of his possibility. Democracy has many meanings, but if it has a moral meaning, it is found in resolving that the supreme test of all political institutions and industrial arrangements shall be the contribution they make to the all-around growth of every member of society (Dewey 1920: 186).

I therefore contend that, like Hegel, for Dewey,

having identity-constituting attachments to one’s community is made compatible with conceiving of oneself as an *individual* – that is, as a *person* with rights and interests separate from those of the community, and as a *moral subject* who is both able and entitled to pass judgment on the goodness of social practices (Neuhouser 2008: 209).

¹⁴ To put this more simply, where the previous philosophical traditions had fundamentally separated mind and world, and individuality and the social, both Hegel and the classical pragmatists conceive of mind and world as interdependent, and conceive of the individual and society as interdependent.

As such, central to this social model is a clear commitment to individuals whose subjectivities are not lost or denigrated in mediated unity.¹⁵ To quote Dewey here:

The individual interest no longer has to be sacrificed to the general law as an accidental or even unworthy element. The particular self-interest is identified with the law, and the law is no longer an abstraction which ought to be, but lives in individuals as the very essence and substance of their own life and interests ... The will finds complete expression only when it gets realized in actual institutions and when these institutions are so bound up with the very life purposes of the individual that they supply him his concrete motives ... These institutions, since they are actual existences, furnish the definite and specific conditions under which action must take place ... [S]ince the individual is a member of these institutions, and can live his own life only in and through these institutions, they are one with himself, they are his true good. It is in performing his own function, taking his own position with reference to these institutions that he truly becomes himself and gets the full activity of which he is capable. It is this union, then, of the subjective and objective sides, of the particular will and the universal, of self-interest and law, which constitutes the essential character of the ethical world (Dewey 1897: 155-56).

From what I have been arguing, there seems to be a tension between the model of the state which Hegel *himself* preferred, namely constitutional monarchy, and the *ironically broader left-wing entailments of his own conceptual resources*.¹⁶ As I have articulated it, the Hegelian model of *Sittlichkeit* sees the state as playing the principal role of realizing freedom by serving as the primary ethical sphere. Hegel makes it clear that individual autonomy cannot be achieved unless there is a supportive background environment structured in accordance with norms of symmetrical recognition, comprising relevant social institutions and values, which provide individuals with material and epistemic resources to realize their own normative aims. Reflexive freedom or positive liberty – to use Isaiah Berlin’s expression – *must* presuppose *but* does not adequately articulate the necessary progressive socio-ecological conditions. Specifically, an individual’s goals cannot become a means of self-realization if these goals are not embedded in an accommodating context,¹⁷ since this context provides the social space as well as the resources necessary for realizing autonomy. To this extent, then, social institutions and practices are not external to individuals’ autonomy – they are *constitutive* of autonomy itself. Crucially, though, acknowledging our intersubjective vulnerability and our interdependency, *contra* neoliberal ideology, should neither be construed as a psychological failing nor entail a model of the human being as inherently impotent or weak. As Dewey writes:

¹⁵ For more on this subject, see Hardimon (1994).

¹⁶ I wish to note that this is not to say that Right-Hegelian positions are completely *incoherent*, but rather that they make a serious error in failing to sufficiently recognize the left-wing entailments of Hegel’s discursive resources.

¹⁷ Patten (1999) calls this a “civic humanism.”

From a social standpoint, dependence denotes a power rather than a weakness; it involves interdependence. There is always a danger that increased personal independence will decrease the social capacity of an individual. In making him more self-reliant, it may make him more self-sufficient; it may lead to aloofness and indifference. It often makes an individual so insensitive in his relations to others as to develop an illusion of being really able to stand and act alone—an unnamed form of insanity which is responsible for a large part of the remediable suffering of the world (Dewey 1916: 48-49)

On such a view, it is not immediately clear why exactly a constitutional monarchy would *best* fulfil the normative function of realizing autonomy, especially because such systems of power and authority are necessarily hierarchical, involving practices of ideological recognition underpinning broader patterns of domination and exploitation.

However, I would argue that there is enough in *left-Hegelian social philosophic resources* to reasonably claim that the state which actualizes autonomy is not *any* kind of constitutional monarchy, and certainly *not* the neoliberal capitalist socio-economic system, since neither system embodies the level of rationality required for the *rational state*. For the framework of neoliberal capitalism hinders the growth of individual freedom and places barriers on the development of autonomy, since the kind of practices the neoliberal capitalist framework encourages are not *rational* practices. In order to effect the realization of substantive rationality in “Objective Spirit,” one would need to sublimate the current socio-economic paradigm. Such sublation involves the project of reconciliation, so much so that the *logic* of reconciliation is designed to prohibit any form of repression of subjectivities.¹⁸ For example, under left-Hegelian democracy, one conceives of individuals as intersubjectively vulnerable determining agents, as opposed to reified and fixed capitalist instruments. In this sense, there is a clear development in recognitive practices, since individuals “count as more than just equal bearers of labour power performing one simple function in the system” (Baumann 2011: 82). As Neuhauser writes,

[i]mplicit in Hegel’s view of ethical life’s Conceptual structure is the claim that part of what makes the modern social world rational is that it allows its members to develop and express different, complementary identities. The idea here is that each type of identity has a distinct value for individuals and that possessing them all is essential to realizing the full range of possible modes of selfhood. To miss out on any of these forms of social membership, then, is to be deprived of one of the basic ways of being a self and hence to suffer an impoverishment of one’s life (Neuhauser 2008: 223).

¹⁸ *Sittlichkeit* reveals how norms are never fixed and infallibilistically constituted, insofar as difference’s emergence can motivate what Iris Marion Young famously dubbed the *politics of difference*.

As such, for a practical relation-to-self to be healthy and in order to be properly autonomous, progressive intersubjective relations must be in place and operating without coercion. Social processes and institutions are, therefore, assessed in terms of how well (if at all) they foster communicability and the development of subjectivities which help individuals achieve self-realization,¹⁹ since, to quote Habermas, “[a] postconventional ego-identity can only stabilise itself in the anticipation of symmetrical relations of unforced reciprocal recognition” (Habermas 1992: 188). To put this another way, *Sittlichkeit* can be legitimately construed as a politicization of G. H. Mead’s sociality thesis:²⁰ *human beings are so immersed in social life that there is no development of full freedom outside the social sphere.*²¹ As Honneth writes in a way which is supportive of the central Hegelian insights:

For modern subjects, it is obvious that our individual freedom depends upon the responsiveness of the spheres of action in which we are involved to our own aims and intentions. The more that we feel that our purposes are supported and even upheld by these spheres, the more we will be able to perceive our surroundings as a space for the development of our own personality (Honneth 2014: 60).

The conceptual resources that comprise Hegel’s theory of social freedom enable one to view Hegel as having far greater affinity with republican democratic forms of association than with a system of constitutional monarchy. Even though Hegel *himself* was no democrat, in the *Philosophy of Right*, §311, he insists that political representation “is not merely a matter of tallying the votes of abstract individuals or tracking the will of an indeterminate ‘public.’” Rather, it is a matter of getting the legitimate and determinate concerns of actual groups of people concretely integrated into the deliberative process” (Farneth 2017: 120). In this way, the general vocabulary of *Sittlichkeit* with its commitment to mutual recognition as communicative action guided by communicative rational practices, rather than by formal mechanisms operating under instrumental-formal rationality, finds kinship with Deweyan democracy.²²

¹⁹ However, Molly Farneth rightly draws a distinction between the *politics of recognition* and Hegel’s account of recognition: “Hegel’s idea of recognition is not about the recognition of fixed *identities* but, rather, about the recognition of *subjectivities*” (Farneth 2017: 118). I would contend that there is scope for Farneth to be *more* critical about the politics of recognition and the claim that it is invariably committed to *reified* identities.

²⁰ “Mentality on our approach simply comes in when the organism is able to point out meanings to others and to himself. This is the point at which mind appears, or if you like, emerges.... It is absurd to look at the mind simply from the standpoint of the individual human organism; for, although it has its focus there, it is essentially a social phenomenon; even its biological functions are primarily social” (Mead 2015: 132-133).

²¹ Cf. “[T]he self ... is socially constituted through and through; it is not able, by detaching itself from particular life contexts, to step outside of society altogether and settle down in a space of abstract isolation and freedom.” (Habermas 1992: 183)

²² For more on Dewey’s relationship with Hegel, see Good (2005). Importantly, though, one should not lose sight of how, for all of the democratic *potentialities* in Hegel’s model of *Sittlichkeit* that bring him closer to Dewey,

A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. The extension in space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own, is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race, and national territory which kept men from perceiving the full import of their activity (Dewey 1916: 93)

Dewey makes it clear that democracy should not be understood as a *purely political concept*. What democracy involves is more basic than either a type of constitution empowering voters or a type of government, one typified by majority rule.²³ Democracy, rather, is a set of values comprising a particular form of associating with others. Democracy is, in short, *a way of living*. As Kadlec correctly notes, “democracy, then, cannot be reduced to a set of institutional functions or abstract visions of the state” (Kadlec 2006: 537). Crucially, a democratic way of life is the life of inquiry, where inquiry, à la Peirce, is open, non-dogmatic, inclusive, fallibilist, ceaseless, critical problem-solving experimentation. To this extent, the democratic life and the inquiring life are *mutually supportive*, insofar as democratic environments promote and sustain inquiry, and inquiry promotes and sustains democracy.

Understood in such a way, there are two important positive connections between Hegel and Dewey here: first, as I argued earlier, for Hegel, social processes and modern institutions are *structured* for the purposes of fostering the development of unique subjectivities that help individuals achieve self-realization. For Dewey, social processes and institutions are structured for the purpose of fostering *growth* and nurture “the critical, inquiring spirit” (RP: 16). As James Good writes, “[o]nce more, for Dewey, the actualization of ideals is the key to Hegel’s thought. The actualisation of freedom is possible only in a society whose institutions are rational and in which the individual can feel at home” (Good 2010: 86). Both philosophers, therefore, are committed to the view that democratic social institutions must be structured in a way that realizes autonomy. As Christopher Zurn elegantly phrases it, “free actions require an accommodating social environment from which those actions derive their sense and purpose, and within which those actions fit into a cooperative scheme of social activity” (Zurn 2015:

Dewey is critical of Hegel’s commitment to constitutional monarchy: “... there can be no doubt that Hegel’s discussion of the internal organization of the state is the most artificial and the least satisfactory portion of his political philosophy. He makes the ideal State most highly realized in the constitutional monarchy in whose structure simple monarchy, aristocracy and democracy are simply subordinate phases” (HPS: §124, 159-160

²³ Cf. “The idea of democracy is a wider and fuller idea than can be exemplified in the state even at its best” (Dewey 1927: 143).

161). Conceived in such a manner, Hegel and Dewey anticipate what Honneth, following Talcott Parsons, calls a ‘relational institution’:

[Relational institutional] systems of action must be termed “relational” because the activities of individual members within them complement each other; they can be regarded as “ethical” because they invoke a form of obligation that does not have the contrariness of a mere “ought,” without, however, lacking moral considerateness. The behavioural expectations that subjects have of each other within such ‘relational’ institutions are institutionalised in the shape of social roles that normally ensure the smooth interlocking of their respective activities. When subjects fulfil their respective roles, they complement each other’s incomplete actions in such a way that they can only act in a collective or unified fashion. The reciprocally expectable behaviour bundled in these social roles therefore has the character of a subtle duty, because the subjects involved regard it as a condition for the successful realization of their common practices (Honneth 2014: 125).

Relational institutions, for Honneth, are required for social freedom: an agent realizes their own individual purposes in and through social institutions in which they engage in mutual recognitive practices. The roles and expectations of relational institutions gain their power and validity from the kind of recognitive relations they promote and enable. As such, for a social institution to be a *relational* one, it must be wholly constituted by practices of communicative action, and it must promote and enable intersubjective recognition. For example, consider the case of a lesbian Latina, Esmeralda, whose participation in relational institutional environments enables her to identify that her self-realization is best achieved through becoming an academic: in order to achieve a healthy practical relation-to-self through this career choice, Esmeralda’s activities must take place in (a) institutional environments whose norms of gender, race, and sexuality are free from coercive ideology; in (b) institutional environments with educational opportunities; in (c) institutional environments with high levels of epistemic capital, such as significant expertise and discursive sophistication; and in (d) institutional environments which offer direct access to labour markets. For Honneth, the environment fostering and constituting relational institutions is distinctive, since

[a]s beings who are dependent on interacting with our own kind, the experience of such a free interplay with our intersubjective environment represents the pattern of all individual freedom: The schema of free activity, prior to any tendencies to retreat into individuality, consists in the fact that others do not oppose our intentions, but enable and promote them (Honneth 2014: 60).

The sphere of *personal relations* (friendship, sexual intimacy, and family) is relational insofar as it allows individuals to develop and pursue their needs, hopes, and dreams, through their

intersubjective confirmation by friends, lovers, and family members. The *market sphere* is relational insofar as it enables the realization of individuals' own aims by institutionalizing cooperation in the activity of meeting needs (consumption) and by institutionalizing cooperation in the activity of recognizing achievement (labour markets). The *modern Rechtsstaat* is relational insofar as it is structured to constitute a form of social freedom through its promotion and embodiment of democratic values, such as inclusion, equality, individuation, cooperation, consensus, and deliberation. To quote Zurn, "[t]hose institutional spheres must then embody practices of reciprocity and institutions of mutual recognition. And they must provide the social context necessary for individuals to realize the diversity of their individual ends 'in the experience of commonality'" (Zurn 2015: 164).

If we interpret Hegelian *Sittlichkeit* and Deweyan democracy within the framework of relational institutions, then one can establish the second – and arguably more significant – socio-philosophical connection between Hegel and Dewey. For Hegel, social processes and modern institutions are *assessed* in terms of how well (if at all) they enable the development of unique subjectivities that help individuals achieve self-realization. For Dewey, social processes and institutions are *assessed* in terms of how well (if at all) they enable growth.

In what follows, I focus on an important passage by Dewey about individual and social growth in *Reconstruction in Philosophy*. I shall argue that by construing Deweyan democracy's concern for growth in relation to the neo-Hegelian idea of a relational institution, *one has compelling reason to regard Hegel and Dewey as supportive of the critical theory tradition*. The normative dimensions of Hegelian *Sittlichkeit* and Deweyan democracy are, crucially, *critical*, in that they play an important role in revealing how *current social institutions fail to be relational institutions, since they fail to promote practices of symmetrical recognition necessary for growth*. However, before all this, I would like to flag two basic problems.

3. Two Critical Challenges for Neo-Hegelianism and Deweyan Pragmatism

The question of whether Hegel and Dewey would be supportive of critical theoretic traditions is being addressed in the growing literature on Hegel and Dewey in relation to critical social theory.²⁴ However, I think the more pertinent question is whether in further developing the Western Marxist tradition of critical social theory, one *should* draw upon the conceptual

²⁴ See, for example, Joas (1993), Kadlec (2006), and the 2017 special issue of the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* on Dewey and critical theory.

resources of Hegel and Dewey as prisms through which the deficiencies of current social reality can be accurately described and transformative visions of emancipation can be articulated.²⁵ If one thinks one should do so, then one must come face-to-face with two potential barriers to such a project. The first problem is how to *plausibly* construe Hegel and Dewey as “philosophers of critique” when Adorno staunchly opposed Hegel’s holism and conception of the individual;²⁶ and Horkheimer, Gramsci (as well as Marcuse) viewed pragmatism either – at best – as positivism, the philosophy of corporatism, and “a crude apology for the *status quo*” (Kadlec 2006: 525) or – at worst – as in direct league with fascist ideology. The second problem is a challenging argument made by Robert Frega concerning Dewey’s interests as a (Hegelian) social philosopher.

Turning to the first problem, for Adorno, what is symptomatic of Western philosophy is the apparent long-standing tradition of prioritizing universality over individuality, a tradition which begins with Plato and is fully actualized in Hegelian thought: prioritizing universality over individuality is evidenced in claiming that while individual objects do have distinctive features, their qualitative distinctness is metaphysically grounded in underlying sameness: Bill and Ted are individual entities and they have different properties, but they only have those specific properties by virtue of being particular instantiations of the same substance-kind. In this sense, universality is metaphysically prior to individuality, as there can be no individuality without universality.²⁷

However, such metaphysical prioritization is regarded by Adorno as harmful: the practice of conceptualization in terms of bringing things under general descriptions and rule-following is an *intrinsically violent and authoritarian practice*.²⁸ Since *Begriffe* function to *seize* the things they are directed at,²⁹ the activity of making sense of things through the application of rule-conforming concepts does not respect the integrity of Being; rather, it is a

²⁵ From this way of phrasing the question, I think there is an even more fundamental question, one which is outside the scope of this chapter but one which I am directly focusing on in a separate forthcoming chapter: *why should the first generation of the Frankfurt School be seen as defining the terms of the tradition of critical theory when Hegel and American pragmatism have been fundamental influences for Habermas and Honneth?*

²⁶ For critical discussions of Adorno’s contempt for Hegel and his variety of idealism, see Baumann (2011) and Giladi (2017).

²⁷ See also the following passage from *Negative Dialectics*: “Hegel concludes in an ever-recurring mode, the particular is nothing. The modern history of the human spirit—and not that alone—has been an apologetic labour of Sisyphus: thinking away the negative side of the universal” (Adorno 1981: 327)

²⁸ Cf. “What tolerates nothing that is not like itself thwarts the reconciliation for which it mistakes itself. The violence of equality-mongering reproduces the contradiction it eliminates” (Adorno 1981: 142-143).

²⁹ The German term for “concept,” *Begriff*, comes from the verb *Begreifen*, which in turn is derived from *Greifen*. “*Greifen*” is often translated as meaning “to grab / to grip / to seize / to snatch / to capture / to strike / to take hold / to bite.”

kind of *viol cognitif*, where reality is forced to conform to concepts. Such violence seems to translate into a loathing of *individuality*.³⁰ As Adorno writes:

unity gets worse as its seizure of plurality becomes more thorough. It has its praise bestowed on it by the victor, and even a spiritual victor will not do without his triumphal parade, without the ostentatious pretence that what is incessantly inflicted upon the many is the meaning of the world ... Thus established, the logical primacy of the universal provides a fundament for the social and political primacy that Hegel is opting for (Adorno 1981: 328)

While the task of rebuking Hegel fell to Adorno, the task of bringing pragmatist theory before the tribunal of critique fell to Horkheimer: *The Eclipse of Reason* contains a plethora of excoriations of pragmatism (see Horkheimer 2004: 29-42).³¹ For the most part, Horkheimer identifies pragmatism, represented by Peirce and Dewey's respective commitments to experimentalism and valorization of scientific inquiry, with a corrosive, scientistic variety of philosophical naturalism.³² In this respect, Horkheimer's argument is that pragmatism instantiates the social pathology of industrial homogenization operating through totalizing patterns of nomothetic rationality. Such practices of instrumental reason not only disenchant nature,³³ but also – in proto-Foucauldian ways – serve as tools of disciplinarity and the coercive regulation of society.³⁴ However, by the time pragmatists have finished reeling from Horkheimer's vitriolic characterization of them, additional discursive rage against Peirce and Dewey is levelled by Gramsci:

Hegel can be considered the theoretical precursor of the democratic revolutions of the nineteenth century, [while] the pragmatists, at the most, have contributed to the creation

³⁰ See Tugendhat (1986) for a more contemporary version of the charge of conservatism.

³¹ See *ER*: 29-42.

³² According to Hans Joas, "[Horkheimer] relies by and large, however, on the pertinent book by Max Scheler [*Erkenntnis und Arbeit: Eine Studie über Wert und Grenzen des pragmatischen Motivs in der Erkenntnis der Welt*], in which pragmatism appears as a philosophy that reduces human life to labor and is therefore not adequate for a portrayal of what is authentically spiritual or personal. In these works Horkheimer therefore continues the tradition of decades of arrogant and superficial German snubbing of the most ingenious stream of American thought. Scheler's interpretation suits Horkheimer's attempt to treat pragmatism throughout as the inconsistent brother of logical positivism" (Joas 1993: 81).

³³ See also the introductory chapter of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* as well as Adorno and Horkheimer's commentary on de Sade's *Juliette*: Juliette "favours system and consequence. She is a proficient manipulator of the organ of rational thought" (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002: 94-95); "Juliette believes in science. She wholly despises any form of worship whose rationality cannot be demonstrated ... She operates with semantics and logical syntax like the most up-to-date positivism ... [She is] a child of the aggressive Enlightenment ..." (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002: 96)

³⁴ For Foucault, there is an intimate connection between scientific culture and power relations, viz. (Foucault 1997: 17). An important characteristic of modern industrial societies is that they tend to be governed by scientific/mathematical models. What underpins these models is the operation of nomothetic reason, which subsumes particulars under formal, universal laws. For Foucault, political systems of control, exclusion, and punishment are bound up with nomothetic practice, viz. (Foucault 1997: 17-18).

of the Rotary Club movement and to the justification of conservative and reactionary movements (Gramsci 1971: 373).

For Gramsci, pragmatism's staunch commitment to *common sense* props up an oppressive *status quo* by espousing utilitarian attitudes that are emblematic of institutional environments built on and sustained by exploitation and instrumentalization. Specifically, the alleged valorization of "traditional" theory by Dewey and Peirce means that pragmatism is "unable to identify hegemonic structures at work in the generation of common sense" (Kadlec 2006: 526), and thereby fails to identify the urgent need to *transform current social reality and articulate a vision of human emancipation*. This is the crucial point I wish to discuss, because there is compelling reason to suppose that the following passage in *Reconstruction in Philosophy* illustrates *critical* dimensions to Dewey's Hegelian social theory:

... the process of growth, of improvement and progress, rather than the static outcome and result, becomes the significant thing. Not health as an end fixed once and for all, but the needed improvement in health – a continual process – is the end and good. The end is no longer a terminus or limit to be reached. *It is the active process of transforming the existent situation*. Not perfection as a final goal, but the ever-enduring process of perfecting, maturing, refining is the aim in living. Honesty, industry, temperance, justice, like health, wealth and learning, are not goods to be possessed as they would be if they expressed fixed ends to be attained. They are directions of change in the quality of experience. Growth itself is the only moral "end" (Dewey 1920: 177, emphasis added).

What Dewey writes about "the active process of transforming the existent situation" would hardly be out of place in *any* critical social theory – whether feminist, critical race theory, queer theory, Adorno and Horkheimer's neo-Marxism,³⁵ Gramsci's philosophy of *praxis*, Habermas's colonization thesis, or Honneth's worries about systemic patterns of individual and social misrecognition and nonrecognition. As Arvi Särkelä and Justo Zamora correctly point out when discussing Dewey's relation to the *basic* idea of critical social theory:

Critical social theories are generally understood to be distinct from other normative theories by their explicit orientation toward emancipation: they not only present normative criteria for assessing the legitimacy or justification of social institutions or merely inquire into the actualized freedom of a given form of social life but claim to point toward a "freedom in view"—an end that might aid those participating in social struggles to overcome the pathological, alienated, or ideological social order of the present. John Dewey's social theory clearly cherishes this ideal of social criticism. It

³⁵ However, I grant that despite this expression by Dewey, the optimism and incremental overtones of his writings hardly seem to fit with the pessimism and negativism of Adorno and Horkheimer.

contributes to a critical social inquiry in a variety of ways, some of which, so we believe, are still to be discovered (Särkelä and Zamora 2017: 213).

By construing Deweyan democracy's concern for growth in relation to the neo-Hegelian idea of a relational institution, I contend *one has compelling reason to regard Hegel and Dewey as providing resources for the critical theory tradition*. The normative dimensions of Hegelian *Sittlichkeit* and Deweyan democracy shed important diagnostic light on a plurality of contemporary social pathologies and misdevelopments brought about by capitalism: this is because the normative dimensions of Hegelian *Sittlichkeit* and Deweyan democracy are, crucially, of *critical* use, in that they can play an important role in revealing how *current social institutions fail to be relational institutions, since they fail to promote practices of symmetrical recognition necessary for growth*. I accept that Hegel (especially) and Dewey are not *as* radically critical of modernity as Adorno and Horkheimer, but, importantly, this does not *eo ipso* disqualify their *conceptual resources* from either involving commitments to progressive social transformation or being legitimately deployed in such a way to articulate emancipatory narratives. For, Hegel, as Lukács correctly notes, “does not close his eyes to the destructive effects of the capitalist division of labour and of the introduction of machinery into human labour” (Lukács 1975: 329). The same goes for Dewey. Furthermore, I think both would also endorse the following critique of neoliberalism by Honneth:

There can be no doubt that the current economic system in the developed countries of the West in no way represents a “relational” institution and is thus not a sphere of social freedom. It lacks all the necessary characteristics of such a sphere: It is not anchored in role obligations to which all could agree, and which interweave with each other in a way that allows subjects to view each other's freedom as the condition of their own freedom; it therefore lacks an antecedent relation of mutual recognition from which the corresponding role obligations could draw any validity or persuasive power (Honneth 2014: 176).

Focusing on Hegel, *Geist* necessarily involving an intersubjective play of intentionality, where mutual recognition between individual agents results in the formation of a community.³⁶ Crucially, though, such a community is not one which deprives the individual of an autonomous life, because *recognitive* relationships – for all of their emphasis on the *unity* of a

³⁶ See the following passage: “What still lies ahead for consciousness is the experience of what Spirit is – this absolute substance which is the unity of the different independent self-consciousnesses which, in their opposition, enjoy perfect freedom and independence: ‘I’ that is ‘We’ and ‘We’ that is ‘I’. It is in self-consciousness, in the Notion of Spirit, that consciousness first finds its turning-point, where it leaves behind it the colourful show of the sensuous here-and-now and the nightlike void of the supersensible beyond, and steps out into the spiritual daylight of the present”. (PS: 110-1)

given community – necessarily involve a commitment to *difference*. His position on love seems to be arguably the *best* example of genuine intersubjectivity: love, conceived of as a *unity* between two individuals, can only exist through *difference*, since love requires “the most genuinely other” (Westphal 1993: 35). So, rather than viewing Hegelianism as advocating a monochromatic and totalitarianism monism, one ought to regard Hegelian conceptual resources as sublating this distinction between monism and pluralism. As Charlotte Baumann rightly claims, “[i]t is precisely Hegel’s intention to develop a conception of a whole which constitutes different entities and allows for their free existence within it, rather than destroying them” (Baumann 2011: 90). *Sittlichkeit*’s intimate relationship with relational institutions reveals concern about currently deficient social reality, namely that antidemocratic trends gradually undermine the realization of what Horkheimer calls an “*expressive totality*”.³⁷ Unlike false totalities, expressive totalities involve a conception of a social whole in which heterogeneous needs and interests of members of society are expressed and also fully developed and realized at no cost to social stability. The consequence of a situation in which there is no expressive whole, but only a crystallization into well-ordered homogeneous complexes under the steering mechanism of instrumental practices and unfettered market forces, is that the plight of individuality is almost hopeless. This is because the subjective and objective conditions for exercising freedom and achieving solidarity risk being eroded by increasing patterns of reification and social homogenization. In Hegelian terms, these intersecting social pathologies and misdevelopments are barriers to intersubjective recognition and the development of healthy subjectivities; in Deweyan terms, these intersecting social pathologies and misdevelopments stunt *growth* and stultify self-development.

Turning now to the second problem I announced at the start of this part of the chapter, Frega articulates the following argument concerning Dewey’s interests as a social philosopher:

As a social philosopher, Dewey was more interested in *criticism* as a constructive and creative activity exercised in ordinary circumstances by social actors and aimed at opening up new possibilities from within social experience (LW 5.125–43) than in *critique* as an academic enterprise aimed at unmasking and unveiling structural pathologies in the style of the grand social theorizing that has spanned the critical tradition from Marx to today, with its panoply of concepts such as alienation, reification, social pathology, iron cage, malaise of civilization, rationalization, ideology, and so on ... In that sense, his interest was not in criticizing reason, technology, corporate life, capitalism, or industry “at large” but in trying to understand how the extraordinary potential they were unleashing could be put to use in the interest of the greatest number of human beings. Hence to the negative vocabulary of the critical tradition, Dewey preferred the positive vocabulary of *reconstruction*, *transformation*,

³⁷ For further on this, see Jay (1984).

direction, control, reform, education, experimentation, learning, intelligence, and democracy. These terms, taken together, compose the positive and constructive side that is essential to any pragmatist social philosophy ... (Frega 2017: 269-270)

For Frega, there is a strict distinction between “criticism” and “critique,” insofar as practices of criticism are inherently positive, whereas practices of critique are inherently negative. This, in turn, means that even though he is “persuaded that inscribing pragmatism within the broad camp of critical theory is a much more promising move than conceiving of it as a mere variant of Anglo-American liberalism” (Frega 2017: 261-262), there is nonetheless *significant* dissonance between Dewey’s (Hegelian) social philosophy and critical social theory. I think Frega’s central premise is highly dubitable, and that consequently Frega’s argument fails here: there is little compelling reason to suppose that practices of *critique* are inherently negative. The vocabulary of *reconstruction, transformation, direction, control, reform, education, experimentation, learning, intelligence, and democracy*, which Frega attributes to Dewey’s Hegelian social theory, does not merely also find a home in critical social theories *tout court*, but is part of their emancipatory grammar.

Crucially, though, what I have claimed here is *not* incompatible with the general idea that there *are* substantive differences between critical social theories, particularly first-generation critical theorists like Adorno and Horkheimer, and Hegelian-Deweyan social theory. For, when one puts Adorno and Horkheimer in conversation with Hegelian-Deweyan theory, the substantive area of constructive disagreement is *whether the social pathologies and misdevelopments endemic in modern capitalist society are essentially rooted in the structure of modern institutions*: does modernity *become* subjugating or has modernity *always been* subjugating? If modernity becomes subjugating, then social pathologies and misdevelopments are *contingent* features of non-progressive socio-political-economic arrangements, which are *temporary* distortions of institutions structured around realizing freedom. This means social pathologies and misdevelopments *can be agonistically overcome within those very institutions*, because there is – to use Honneth’s famous term – an untouched “normative surplus” in modernity: “... the non-coercive power to assert a normative surplus exercises a permanent pressure that will sooner or later destroy any remains of traditional practices” (Honneth 2014: 164). To quote Zurn here:

This occurs by overcoming limited interpretations of extant recognition principles and tapping the “surplus validity” of those principles that has not yet been realized in social reality. Experiences of violated recognition are then the detectors of surplus validity. When such experiences coalesce into social movements, the possibility exists for

struggles for expanded social relations that transcend society's current limited forms (Zurn 2015: 151).

However, if modernity has always been subjugating, then modernity itself is *inherently* pathological, and its pathological qualities are due to its *genetic make-up rather than the background social forces at play distorting institutions for freedom*. As is well-known, Adorno and Horkheimer deemed modernity to be inherently pathological. However, for Habermas and Honneth – in differing ways – the social pathologies and misdevelopments in advanced Western social democracies responsible for crisis situations are not embedded in modernity itself. The pathologies, misdevelopments, and relevant crises are due to either colonizing encroachment of the communicative territory of the lifeworld by the steering power of instrumental practices, or by moral grammars which do not promote and sustain environments for intersubjective recognition. For Honneth in particular, since I have focused on his idea of a relational institution, the diagnosis is as follows: *social pathologies and misdevelopments of capitalism are largely produced in and sustained by non-relational institutional environments, environments which produce and sustain intersectional injustices*.

On Honneth's account, the socialist aspect of his variety of critical social theory is predicated on the idea that "the realization of the promised harmony between freedom, equality and solidarity is not possible under the prevailing social conditions" (Honneth 2017: 107). In this respect, Hegel and Dewey are given pride of place as providing resources for making sense of the significance of intersubjectivity as a way of progressing society out of a state of pathology. On the Hegelian side of things, carefully unpacking how the concept of intersubjective recognition needs *refinement*, so that clandestine power relations which constitute distortive recognitive practices can be exposed and combatted is something which is necessary for future critical social theory to maintain its critical and emancipatory function. This is not to say Honneth's *own* account of recognition is irredeemably naïve and unfit for socialist tasks, but rather that Honneth's *own* account of recognition is not *as* sensitive to the presence and workings of power relations which operate surreptitiously, often laying the background conditions of "allegedly" mutual recognitive practices. As such, in the age of neoliberalism, Trump, Brexit, post-truth, populism, the demonization of expertise, neo-fascism, neo-nationalism, unitary concepts of identity, silencing, hermeneutic marginalization, and every-increasing economic inequalities, Hegel's value – at a general level – would consist in helping work out the complex aetiology and epidemiology of regressive social and economic practices. For example, the aetiology on the Hegelian story would involve seeing patterns of

misrecognition and nonrecognition as symptoms of a pathological and regressive conception of freedom and subjectivity; furthermore, on the epidemiological side of things, the Hegelian approach would involve seeing how pathological and regressive conceptions of freedom and subjectivity have permeated various levels in modernity – ranging from the economic arrangements of current society to the vocabularies governing racial and gender norms, to name a few.

However, in response to what I have just written, Fabian Freyenhagen – a critic of Honneth and sceptical that Deweyan articulations of Hegelian *Sittlichkeit* have critical implications/applications³⁸ – can reasonably counter by claiming that what is required is *radical* critique rather than normative reconstruction:

It is thus unsurprising to see that Honneth in *Freedom's Right* does not think of social pathologies and other social aberrations as indicting our social world in such a way that revolutions are required to address them. Rather, they are now understood on the model of an immanent critique with a reformist orientation: as deviations from norms that are already embedded in the social fabric and that could be realized without fundamental changes to it (Freyenhagen 2015: 143).

In many respects, Freyenhagen's Adornian claim that social pathologies and other social aberrations indicting our social world require *revolution* to address them seems difficult to resist. For a reformist disposition at best seems to offer only the occasional humanizing tweaks to a system of endemic oppression in such a way that just softens the blow from neoliberalism rather than breaking neoliberalism's cycle of ideological production and reproduction. Reformism, simply put, is not equipped with the critical vocabulary for critiquing current social reality. For example, a particularly helpful way of connecting populist upheavals in Western Europe and the US and the breakdown of trust in experts is by regarding both populist and fascistic discourse as construing experts as *inauthentic* members of given societies. In this respect, I think there are two especially worrying aspects about populism (on the Left and Right) and the demonization of expertise in many democratic societies. Firstly, there is distressing misrecognition of and testimonial injustice against rational agents. Secondly, neo-nationalist and right-wing populist conceptual frameworks have become bedfellows with

³⁸ Cf. "This reasoning cries out for criticism, especially on the basis of the ideology critique so important to the (first generation of the) Critical Theory tradition. It does not follow from the mere fact that institutions guarantee some freedoms and people actively reproduce them, that these people think that the institutions are the best there ever have been; nor, indeed, that the institutions deserve the active support they receive. False consciousness can make us actively support what we would not so support, but instead oppose, if we were free from this false consciousness. The mere fact that a society guarantees some freedom does not suffice to show that it does not generate false consciousness" (Freyenhagen 2015: 141).

steering mechanisms of instrumental systems, and have perverted public spheres by bringing in cognitive pathogens into the space of reasons. In doing so, the transformative potential of relational institutions has been stultified, to the extent that one may quite rightly question if existing modern social institutions were *ever* in fact *relational* institutions. Reformism, therefore, seems hardly the right kind of socio-intellectual orientation for *these* times. To make my points more explicit, I want to focus on the practices typically used to undermine the voices of social critics, where such practices are now part and parcel of reactionary dispositions towards anti-racist protests.³⁹

IV

Anti-racist Protests and the Neo-Hegelian Critical Theory Response: Revolution or Reform?

1992 saw an uprising in Los Angeles after police officers were exonerated despite their having beaten Rodney King to death. For Robert Gooding-Williams, one of the two principal ways in which the media covered the L.A. riots was the “conservative view,” according to which, “the people on the streets were taken to embody an uncivilized chaos that needed to be stamped out in order to restore law and order. On this account, the “rioting” had nothing to do with the King verdict but expressed a repressed opportunism just waiting for an excuse to flout the law” (Gooding-Williams 2006: 14). Under the conservative view, the claim that the L.A. riots represented *distress* and *legitimate* anger at institutional racism and police brutality is summarily *dismissed*, to the extent that the grammar and vocabulary of *protest against injustice* are viciously misrecognized to the point of *silence* and *erasure*. As Gooding-Williams writes, the conservative and reactionary view is “a failure to regard the speech or actions of black people as manifesting thoughtful judgments about issues that concern all members of the political community” (Gooding-Williams 2006: 14). To further illustrate racial testimonial injustice, it would be helpful to reflect on an example used by Jane McConkey (2004), a true story told by Patricia Williams:

I was shopping in Soho [in Benetton’s] and saw a sweater that I wanted to buy for my mother. I pressed my round brown face to the window and my finger to the buzzer, seeking admittance. A narrow-eyed, white teenager wearing running shoes and feasting on bubble gum glared out, evaluating me for signs that would pit me against the limits of his social understanding. After about five seconds, he mouthed “We’re closed”, and blew pink rubber at me. It was two Saturdays before Christmas, at one o’clock in the afternoon;

³⁹ A similar story can also be told about reactionary dispositions towards feminist movements such as #MeToo and #TimesUp.

there were several white people in the store who appeared to be shopping for things for *their* mothers. I was enraged. At that moment I literally wanted to break all the windows of the store and *take* lots of sweaters for my mother. In the flicker of his judgmental grey eyes, that sales-child had transformed my brightly sentimental, joy-to-the-world, pre-Christmas spree to a shambles ... I am still struck by the structure of power that drove me into such a blizzard of rage ... No words, no gestures, no prejudices of my own would make a bit of difference to him; his refusal to let me into the store ... was an outward manifestation of his never having let someone like me into the realm of his reality (Williams 1991: 44-45).

A rumour got started that the Benetton's story wasn't true, that I had made it up, that it was a fantasy, a lie that was probably the product of a diseased mind trying to make all white people feel guilty. At this point I realized it almost didn't make any difference whether I was telling the truth or not – that the greater issue I had to face was the overwhelming weight of a disbelief that goes beyond mere disinclination to believe and becomes active suppression of anything I might have to say (Williams 1991: 242).

In addition to having her personal integrity harmed by the shop clerk's racial prejudices, Williams suffered further injustice by having her claims dismissed and not afforded serious *credibility*:⁴⁰ rather than be accorded the default level of epistemic respect and doxastic appreciation provided by Tyler Burge's Acceptance Principle (Burge 1993: 467), Williams is not only treated with epistemic scorn, she is also stripped of any normative authority, and is deemed as someone who violates norms of assertion (Grice 1975: 26-30). To use a Sellarsian *tournure de phrase*, testimonial injustice deprives Williams, a rational agent, of her rightful place as someone moving in the space of reasons,⁴¹ and thereby leaves individuals like her who are prejudiced against in a state of self-alienation: because Williams is *not* recognized⁴² – *as opposed to recognized but treated with less credibility than other epistemic participants* – she is forcibly alienated from her own rationality, where her rationality enables her to be a member of a community of inquirers.⁴³ Crucially, the asymmetrical nature of the cognitive environment

⁴⁰ Cf. McConkey (2004: 202-203): "Patricia Williams made claims to knowledge arising as a result of her experiences as a black woman and this is both part of the reason why those claims were viewed as controversial and why they were disbelieved. Belonging to underprivileged social groups whose experience sharply differs from those who constitute more powerful groups, she provided a perspective that offered a challenge to the dominant norms in society. But her accusations of racism were quickly dismissed as imaginings or exaggerations. She suffered from an inability of others to appreciate the perspective from which her assertions had sprung and from the stereotypes and prejudices about black women that fed into the credibility assessment others made of her."

⁴¹ "In characterising an episode or state as that of knowing, we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state; we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says." (Sellars 1997: §36). For a similar account, see Jones (2002).

⁴² See the following similar remark by Miranda Fricker: "[T]here will be few contexts in which a hearer's prejudice is so insanely thoroughgoing that he fails to regard his interlocutor as a subject of knowledge *at all*" (Fricker 2007: 134-5).

⁴³ "The intrinsic harm of testimonial injustice as epistemic objectification: when a hearer undermines a speaker in her capacity as a giver of knowledge, the speaker is epistemically objectified" (Fricker 2007: 133).

causes Williams to feel that the space of reasons, the locus of normative discourse where epistemic practices derive their sense of meaning and purpose, is not welcoming to her.

In 2014, after Michael Brown was killed by police officers in Ferguson, uprisings and protests against racial injustice and police brutality in the US coalesced into the #BlackLivesMatter movement. As part of the effort to explicitly challenge the reactionary socio-epistemic paradigms which construe anti-racist protestors as public *threats*, Black Lives Matter demonstrations typically involve the chants “Hands Up, Don’t Shoot!,” where marchers raise their hands above their heads whilst chanting. To quote José Medina here, “[t]his slogan performatively challenges the misplaced presumption that demonstrators pose a threat to public order, interrogating the underlying narratives that depict them as such a threat, while invoking alternative images of peaceful expressions of group agency” (Medina 2018: 12). Furthermore, the chants “Whose streets? Our streets!” and “No Justice, No Peace” are *deliberately* misinterpreted and misrecognized by reactionary groups to imply that the basic progressive claim “Black Lives Matter” is equivalent to “Black Lives Matter More than White Lives.” Crucially, this forms a significant part of the explanation for why #AllLivesMatter is in fact *reactionary*, since #AllLivesMatter reveals itself as either wilfully or non-wilfully ignorant of structural racism and systemic misrecognition.

I previously claimed that Honneth’s own account of recognition should *not* be construed as irredeemably naïve and unfit for emancipatory tasks, but rather that Honneth’s own account of recognition is not *as* sensitive to the presence and workings of power relations which operate surreptitiously, often laying the background conditions of ideological practices. One way of reconciling Freyenhagen’s Adornian conception of critique with the Deweyan-Hegelian model of social critique can be articulated as follows: what Honneth’s neo-Hegelian socialist position *currently* lacks and what *my* neo-Hegelian socialist position involves is *critical engagement with the concept of intersubjective recognition at the macro-epistemic level as well at the macrosocio-economic level*. By this I mean that the Deweyan-Hegelian model helps further critical social theory into *new* transformative and radical iterations by asking critical social theorists to see how recognitive injustices at the *epistemic* level – the backlash to #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo being exemplary cases here – are intersectional with socio-economic abuses, so much so that epistemically repressive environments and socio-economically alienating environments are mutually sustaining. From this perspective, then, it is no coincidence that epistemically and hermeneutically unjust environments are involved in the decomposition of contemporary public spheres.

In many respects, my neo-Hegelian socialist position questions the *whole horizon of modernity* that Honneth takes for granted. However, what separates my approach from that of Freyenhagen's Adornian preference for *total* revolution is that I think there is compelling reason to suppose that questioning the whole horizon of modernity does not *necessarily* lead to one construing that horizon as *essentially* incapable of social transformation and that total revolution is the *only* viable option for the critic. For the very development of forms of resistance to reactionary dispositions is part and parcel of *critical modernist* practices, wherein modernity is subjected to immanent critique to emerge out of a pathological state. To put this another way, the advantage of subjecting modernity to immanent critique is that I think there are enough resources in the project of modernity to correct itself, since pathologies and misdevelopments in modern social spheres are *contingent* and they *can* be overcome eventually through immanent critique. Intersectional injustices can be resisted and overcome not *only* by total revolution, but also through the development of a *radical form of deliberative democracy*, in which *power* is rooted in the *communicative* power of the lifeworld, especially a well-functioning public sphere. Traversing "the long march through the institutions" (Marcuse 2014: 336) is progressively transformative, because establishing epistemically just and mutual recognitive environments necessarily involves combatting and reversing the *unofficial* circulation of power in constitutional democracy. *The unofficial circulation of power renders the social environment non-conducive to the development of a healthy practical-relation-to-self*. In a "crisis situation" (Habermas 1996: 380), the flow of power can be reversed to its official state once the public become *actively* aware of its unofficial circulation. This form of consciousness reveals how one no longer deems current frameworks as *rationally satisfying*, thereby compelling agents to radically revise their sense-making practices for the purpose of achieving at-homeness in the world.

On the subject of Dewey's role in advancing the development of critical social theory in confronting and overcoming the social pathologies and misdevelopments in Western democracy, a somewhat similar story can be told. Honneth himself recognizes that "[t]he solution Dewey proposed counts today as everyday pragmatic knowledge and can be understood as a continuation of the already mentioned notion that at the stage of the social, unused potentials for social renewal can only be discovered through a process of communication which is as unrestricted as possible" (Honneth 2017: 96). In this respect, then, Dewey's commitment to democracy-as-inquiry (and inquiry-as-democracy) plays a very similar diagnostic and therapeutic role as Hegel's commitment to untrammelled subjectivities and recognitive practices. If one is to adequately explain the complexities of the aetiology and

epidemiology of democratic crises, then a significant feature of one's diagnosis involves judging *current epistemic practices as not modelled on the practices of inquiry*. Under such an account, Dewey's theoretical reconstruction of the understanding of the relationship between the individual and society provides a framework for actualising the normative surplus of existing social practices: *where there is no practice of unrestricted inquiry, there is democratic decomposition; where there is democratic decomposition, there is no practice of unrestricted inquiry*. Both are mutually sustaining.

In this chapter, I hope to have shown that my distinctive Deweyan, democratic interpretation of Hegelian *Sittlichkeit* forms the basis of a critical theory in a *broad* sense. Crucially, I also hope to have shown that critical social theorists have to start focusing on the *epistemic* as well as socio-economic and cultural level when diagnosing and overcoming social pathologies and misdevelopments in current social reality.

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